

be fought, as in fact it was.¹ With the superiority of force which the Federals possessed, the result of such an encounter ought not to be doubtful; but, as everything depended on the result, the entire strength of the Department ought to be arrayed in line to gain the victory. Any operation, therefore, which diminished the number of men disposable for such a decisive combat, as the invasion of East Tennessee was certain to do, it was wiser to postpone for the time being.

Apart from these considerations, the advance upon East Tennessee by way of Lebanon and Somerset necessitated the transportation of supplies and the maintenance of communications for some two hundred miles over country roads, never good, and well-nigh impassable in winter. Mr. Van Home, in his attempt * to glorify General Thomas for his alleged opinion in favor of invading East Tennessee, mentions President Lincoln's recommendation to Congress to appropriate money to build a railroad from Kentucky to East Tennessee.³ This suggestion was not acted on, yet Mr. Van Home, in the heat of argument, apparently, virtually assumes the existence of this railroad as lending force to Thomas's

opinion. The result is that the reader is bewildered, and the criticism worthless.

3. It may not be out of place to state here succinctly what we have learned respecting the views of the President and his generals in regard to the.

¹ At Shiloh, on April 6 and 7, 1862.

² Van Home's *Thomas*, 60.

³ See 5 N. & W., 66, 67.